Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraph [0007] with the following amended paragraph:

One naive solution is to use a micropayment scheme, in which a "bank generates "coins" for its customers, which they can spend to pay for services provided by various merchants. The user pre-pays for these coins, and the system is debit-based. If an Internet service is being accessed, for example, the user can include one coin with every packet of data it sends over the <u>foreign service provider's</u> (FSP's) network. The FSP is provided with a mechanism for validating these coins. After validating a coin, the FSP may transmit the corresponding packet. Ultimately, the FSP provides all of these coins to the <u>home service provider</u> (HSP) so that the FSP can be reimbursed. The electronic payment system is secure in the sense that only the HSP can create valid electronic coins that no other party can forge.